

One World Trade Center Opening Marks a Thriving, Revived New York



One World Trade Center opened this week, marking downtown Manhattan's resurgence since the 2001 attacks. (Photo by Mario Tama/Getty Images)

The opening of One World Trade Center this week is the culmination of everything so many of us said 13 years ago, when terrorists brought down the Twin Towers but failed to break this city. Even as we mourned, even as we cried, we told the world that we would rebuild, that we would turn the ruins of those buildings into something spectacular, and that downtown would not simply return to normal one day, but would be better than it was before the barbarians invaded.

We will rebuild, we said. We meant it. And we did it.

One World Trade Center is an architectural act of defiance, a symbol of victory over those who despise reason, liberty, tolerance, and, indeed, freedom.

We have been privileged to watch this landmark skyscraper, gorgeously designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, rise over these last few years, knowing that each new girder, each new floor, was a step forward not only for New York, but for every city and every culture that stands defiant against those who would impose their regime of death on the world.

But beyond the symbolism, One World Trade's opening is another milestone in the re-imagination and reconstruction of New York and the region for the 21st century.

The September 11 Memorial and Museum are open, honoring the dead and teaching thousands of visitors the horrors of what occurred, even while new office buildings rise alongside the site, allowing us to recognize the losses and also accommodate the future.

From the Fulton Center transit hub (due to open in just days) to the Hudson Yards, from the brownstones of Brooklyn to the towers of Jersey City, the region's economic, financial, and intellectual center of gravity continues to spread to the south, the east and the west. The No. 7 train will soon bring passengers to a new neighborhood on the Far West Side. The Barclays Center has drawn world-class entertainment to once-forslorn Downtown Brooklyn.



An aerial view of the National September 11 Memorial and Museum taken from 1 World Trade Center (Photo by Arman Dzidzovic/New York Observer)

Gary Lutnick would have turned 50 years old on Monday. He was murdered, along with 657 other Cantor Fitzgerald employees, when a hijacked plane struck One World Trade Center. His older brother, Cantor Fitzgerald CEO Howard Lutnick, wrote a beautiful tribute to him on his personal Facebook page that concluded, "We will always remember and celebrate your life." This new, gleaming, proud tower at One World Trade Center honors America's commitment to reach for the sky.

So much of this was unimaginable on September 12, 2001, as courageous men and women scoured that awful pile of debris, searching for the missing and removing the dead. Surely the nation's enemies, following events from their hiding places, were certain that the city would never rise from those ashes, that they had inflicted a mortal wound on a city that stood for all that they despised.

They were wrong and we were right. We rebuilt and reconfigured and reimagined and by doing so we created a better city and a more-prosperous region.

Thirteen years ago, we promised ourselves that this city and this region would be better than it was on September 11, 2001.

